

**Legislative Testimony  
Human Services Committee  
HB 5355 AAC An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practice Pilot Program  
Tuesday, March 2, 2010  
Steve Hall, DMD**

Dear Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Dr Steven Hall, and I have been a practicing general dentist in Farmington since 1997. I am writing to oppose the HB5355 An Act Concerning An Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner Pilot Program. I have several concerns about this bill.

It is no secret that nationally mid-level providers such as the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP), Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT), and Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC), are being investigated to improve access to care. The PEW and Kellogg foundations do not support the ADHP or CDHC models and instead are advocating a DHAT as a better model to improve access to care. The proponents of this bill are attempting to introduce a nationally novel health care provider to Connecticut without knowing the need for an ADHP in Connecticut. They are putting the cart before the horse. With one of the highest dentist to population ratios in the country, Connecticut does not need a new type of dentist.

HB 5355 is a scope of practice bill. It proposes itself as an access to care bill, but the wording of the bill talks to scope of practice. This bill talks of "preparation and restoration of primary and permanent teeth using direct placement of appropriate dental materials," and the non-surgical extraction of teeth. Clearly this is a scope of practice bill, but nowhere does it talk about or address access to care.

Access to care is the guise under which this bill is raised. The dentists of Connecticut understand the access to care issue and we have been on the forefront of increasing access to care. Dentists in Connecticut have signed up in record numbers to become providers within the Husky network, and currently patients in Husky enjoy some of the highest utilization rates in the country. According to DSS data, patients who wish to be seen by a dentist can get an appointment within two weeks, and emergency patients do not have a waiting time.

Dentists in Connecticut understand the access to care issue and have responded by swelling the ranks of dental providers in the Husky network. We are also working to improve school based services, Home by One, and Head Start services. The ADHP concept is not supported by national organizations looking into mid-level providers. This bill is really a scope of practice bill and not an access to care bill. There are many ways to increase access to care in Connecticut, but is unknown whether an ADHP is needed or appropriate. Therefore, this bill is premature and without merit.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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